

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

in Teheran. There in a sermon he asserted that free Poland would be restored despite all the misfortunes that had befallen her and that the American people in their hearts were at one with the gallant Polish Allies. In view of the fact that this visit happened shortly after the rupture of diplomatic relations between the London Polish government and the Soviet Union, the -Archbishop's speech was not devoid of political implications. Leopold Herman, Associated Press correspondent; John Wallis, Reuters correspondent; and Oscar Guth, United Press correspondent, filed dispatches to their agencies covering this event. The Soviet censor stopped all three dispatches with no explanation whatever. No amount of pleading helped. One may add here that censorship was supposed to be applied only so far as the security of the Allied war effort was concerned. No legal justification existed, therefore, in this particular case, for censoring the prelate's statements.

Another striking example was furnished at the time of the oil crisis in the late fall of 1944. When the Iranian government refused to grant the Soviets an oil concession, Communist-led mobs demonstrated in the streets of Teheran. The outside world obtained most of the news about the crisis and the demonstrations from Soviet sources. The Tass Agency said, for example, that about 20,000 people demonstrated against the government. In reality the number was much smaller. When Western correspondents wanted to send news to this effect, their dispatches were again stopped by the Soviet censor. Thus the public in the West received an altogether distorted picture of a situation that should have served as a good case study of Soviet ex-

pansionism.<sup>17</sup> In connection with the same crisis the difficulties of the Iranian government in the field of censorship were revealed. Premier Mohammed Sa'ed, who had to weather the oil storm, attempted to keep in constant touch with Iranian envoys abroad in order to inform them and be informed himself of various reactions. He was prevented, however, according to his own admission, from communicating by telegraph with his diplomatic representatives, for the Soviet authorities controlling the telegraph link at Pahlavi stopped his messages at the most critical moment.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See p. 216.

<sup>18</sup> is *Ra'd-i'Emruz*, Dec 20, 1944. See also Appendix no. IV.